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Musket

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Band Night, which returned to LHS after a year's absence, featured some fine musical talent. **See story on page 3.**

Photo by Josh Vacanti

Wilson Set to Move Up From Principal Post

by
Erika Dahlin-Lee

At a specially summoned meeting on Tuesday, January 17, 1995, Principal David Wilson announced to staff members that he would be leaving his position of High School Principal to become the Director Personnel for the Lexington Public School System, a position formerly occupied by Mr. Richard Barnes who recently retired. Wilson will be required to deal with various school organizations including the teachers union, school administration and custodial staff.

Wilson has been at LHS for 30 years, serving in capacities of teacher, unit chair, housemaster, department head, and assistant principal. he has been the principal of LHS for the past six years.

Wilson cited a need for change after being at the High School for so many years as his primary reason for accepting the new position. He also expressed excitement about the opportunities and challenges he feels the new position will offer.

Diversification of the school faculty will be one of Wilson's primary objectives in his new position. "I feel there is a need to diversify the staff in public school and to draw minority candidates in order that all students have role models which they can relate to. My goal will be to diversify the teaching establishment in Lexington."

Wilson denied that his reasons for leaving are related to the new education regulations that LHS will have to adhere to in the coming years, namely the Massachusetts Education Reform Act which requires the elimination of remedial classes and the Massachusetts Board of Education act which will significantly increase the number of hours in a school year. Wilson admits, however, that these laws will create considerable difficulties and that they will pose a challenge to the new principal.

"LHS, like many other high schools is faced with serious financial issues of an increasing student population, special education, postponement of updating facilities, and the diminishing community tax base," Wilson noted. However, Wilson remained silent about who he would like to see shoulder these burdens stating that he would not like to prejudice anyone's position.

As his most important accomplishments as principal at LHS, Wilson notes his hiring of excellent new teachers of the past several years and his efforts to create a democratic environment for the school. The faculty Steering Committee, for example, is allowed to establish its own agenda and course.

Recently, Wilson has been praised for his aptitude in public affairs and for his sensitive handling of the racial tensions at the High School. His establishment of the Race-Relations Advisory Council allowed students to discuss problems and solutions to racially based problems among students.

The search for a new principal will not be exclusively within the Lexington School System. A faculty meeting planned for January 24 will further discuss the issue.

LHS Principal David Wilson has accepted the position of Director of Personnel for the Lexington Public School System

Photo from Musket *File*

Mass. Education Act To Lengthen School

by
Erika Dahlin-Lee

School will be longer next year for most students. On December 21, 1994, the Massachusetts Board of Education ruled that all high school must provide a minimum of 990 hours of instruction per year. This mandate requires that students have 5.5 hours of class per day.

Currently, LHS students receive from 3.7 to 5.3 hours of instruction per day. The new regulations will increase student's hours by as much as 300 hours.

The School Board's decision was spurred by a recent national report that revealed that students in foreign countries, such as Japan, Germany, and France, receive almost double the amount of basic education than Americans in high school.

The new plan dictates that the 990 hours of instruction be committed to basic academic subjects such as mathematics, science, English, history, art, and foreign language. Time taken up by study halls, free-blocks, homeroom, lunch, and passing time will no longer be counted as part of the school day. Early release days, previously designated to professional development, will be eliminated. Teachers will be required to schedule training outside of school time. Also, seniors will be able to graduate at most 12 days before the end of school.

The time requirements outlined by the plan could create sizable conflicts in the school. In order to fulfill the requirement, either the school day or the school year will have to be lengthened, depriving students either of time for extracurricular activities, or time for summer programs.

The Time and Learning Committee, chaired by math teacher Kevin Kelly, has been established to help deal generate solutions to problems associated with a longer school year. This committee will be examining the strengths and weaknesses of the present system at LHS. It will also investigate experimental scheduling at other schools. The Committee will propose a plan, due in June, for Principal David Wilson to submit to the School Board. The Committee has already received a $9,300 grant to support its research.

Lexington High School will be expected to comply with basic regulations beginning with its 1995-96 school year. By 1996-7 special needs, occupational therapy and independent studies will be eliminated from credited curriculum.

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This year's school budget seems to be balanced and ready for action.
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The boys' swim team is still undefeated after five meets this season.
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Senate Has Flurry of New Bills

by
Andrew Sung

The 1994-5 Lexington High School Senate is one of the most active senates in the history of the school. Moderator Dan MacLean is hoping to introduce 2-3 new bills every meeting, and the flurry of new business is an indicator of the dynamic senate.

Dubbed the "bill factory" by MacLean, the senate has made already made into law several bills this year. Included among them is the Special Senate Day Bill which was introduced by Communication Committee Chairperson Alyssa Rayman-Read. The bill authorized December 7 to be the Special Senate Day, and senators walked around the school introducing themselves and looking for feedback. Also, an open senate meeting was held in which all students were encouraged to participate.

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The super efficient Student Senate is lead by moderator Dan MacLean and Secretary Alyssa Rayman-Reed.

Photo by Josh Vacanti

Will the Budget Budge?

by
Adam Bund and Matt Kishlansky

This past week marked the unveiling of a landmark school budget proposal, featuring plans to install computers in every classroom. Superintendent Dr. Jeffrey Young's $35.9 million budget, includes a $3.8 million increase over last year's school budget. Young attributed the 11.8% increase to the nearly 200 new students who will be attending Lexington Public Schools next year.

The School Committee proposal is still in preliminary stages, but it must be discussed during the January 24 public budget hearing. A vote on the actual dollar amounts involved will occur a week later.

Young divided the budget increase into three categories, maintenance, restoration, and improvements. The cost of maintaining current programs is estimated at $2,437,000. In order to restore certain programs cut in previous years, the school will need $815, 000. The most costly restoration will be the hiring of 2.8 reading specialists at a cost of $102,200. Lexington's ratio of students to reading specialists is currently 787:1. $66,169 will be appropriated under the proposal to hire one full time librarian at L.H.S. Improvements to existing programs will cost an additional $551,000.

Discussing the ramifications of the upcoming influx in population in the Lexington Public Schools, Young contended that $387, 000 would be needed in teacher's salaries in order to maintain current teacher to student ratios. An additional $420,000 worth of materials would also be required.

Another category in this year's budget which will require additional funds is special education. Dr. Young projects a $1.1 million increase over last year's special education expenditures. Special Education teacher's salaries are also projected to rise.

Yet the biggest news in the new budget is the new five year technology plan. In the first year, all schools would be rewired for network communication. This would serve two purposes: 1) it would provide an internal network and 2) it would allow access to the internet. Lexington will add five CD-ROM file servers to libraries, upgrade existing file servers in order to be ready for future technological proliferation, and upgrade existing classroom computers which lack the necessary wiring for networking.

Most notable in the first year, however, is Lexington's goal to purchase enough computers to have 1 computer for every full time teacher. Its current ratio is 1 computer per every four teachers.

Senior Rupa Mukherjee, LHS School Committee Representative, called the plan both "unprecedented" and "exciting." She vividly recounted an example of students using the internet to supplement classroom learning. According to Mukherjee, "When one of the Middle Eastern Peace Accords was signed, students at one [Lexington Public] school were able to read the treaty the day it came out. By quadrupling the amount of computers, and increasing the technological capabilities of those computers, the educational possibilities for both students and teachers are limitless." However, limits may be applied to the technological improvements, due to its $2, 465, 051 price tag.

New Bills Abound in Student Senate

SENATE

Continued from page 1

According to senate rules, any student is allowed to come and participate at senate meetings, and MacLean found that the Special Senate Day "produced a lot of feedback and helped students learn what the senate really is about."

In trying to meet MacLean's goal of doing "more this year than ever before," the senate has put into law several other bills. The Bathroom Resolution, which was put forth by MacLean, gives the School Climate Committee the authority to redecorate the bathrooms. Policy Committee Chairperson Minardi calls the resolution "an interesting and creative innovation on the part of the School Climate Committee." However, the bill is being hindered by a lack of art examples. The senate urges students to hand in examples of their work.

The Senate has also made the Policy Committee's Teacher Evaluation Resolution a law. The law gave the Policy Committee the authority and power to review the current evaluation at the end of the year. Commenting on her own bill Minardi noted that "it represents our effort to accomplish a necessary but very difficult change." Another Policy Committee bill which was made into a law was the Proctoring Bill which prohibits teachers from proctoring final exams when their students are taking final exams. The goal of the bill is to make teachers more available to the students to answer questions during the final.

Among the other bills that have been made into law was one introduced by Mr. Palladino. Palladino requested that all juniors attend a mandatory assembly where one of Schindler's refugees will speak. Although open to all students, the junior class must attend the assembly. Palladino also organized last year's sophomore class trip to see Schindler's List.

The controversial Closing Outdoor Eating Bill, which was introduced by MacLean was voted down by a firm majority. In addition to these bills, the Senate has also elected the new members of the site-based council. The site-based council is composed of students, parents, teachers and administrators. Principal David Wilson explained that the purpose of the Council is "to implement ideas for change."

The Referendum bill, which was introduced by non-senator David Eisner was recently voted down. The bill would have given students the power to put any bill in question to the whole of the school. If students wish to put a bill to referendum, 15% of the student body must sign a petition to get it on the ballot, and two thirds of the student body must vote for it.

"It's an exciting time to be in the senate."

-Moderator Daniel MacLean

MacLean notes that the "bill gives students a veto power over the senate and it enhances the checks and balances system at the high school." MacLean is reproposing the bill and hopes to garner more support for it a second time around.

MacLean's Sophomore Open Campus bill was also shot down. The bill would allow all sophomores with a reasonable grade point average the same open campus privileges juniors and seniors have. The bill is being reproposed by Josh Caras, and it is being revamped and further detailed.

On the table is the Community Service bill which would reject the recently passed 40 hour of community service requirement for all incoming freshmen.

"It's an exciting time to be in the Senate," concluded MacLean.

Senior Alyssa Rayman-Reed was voted President of the National Honor Society.

Photo by Josh Vacanti

News Briefs

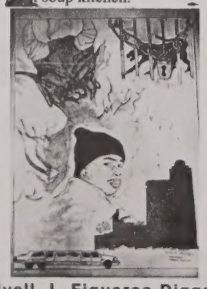
Senior's Art at Wang Center Exhibit

Senior Myell J. Figueroa-Diggs' artwork was included in the 1994-5 Art by Kids art exhibit at The Wang Center which recently ended. Myell was one of only 50 winners selected from a pool of 1161 submissions. The exhibit will soon travel to the TJX Co. Headquarters in Framingham in February and then return to the Wang Center in April for the another gala show.

The theme of the Art by Kids contest was "Hopes and Fears".

NHS Starts to Plan Events

The National Honor Society was recently selected from a pool of nearly 100 nominees. 57 LHS Seniors were selected to be part of the group. At its first meeting, the group, which is guided by Assistant Principals Diane Lande and Arthur Dulong, elected Alyssa Rayman-Read to be president, and voted Geertui Spaepan for Secretary. The group plans to hold many events and programs to help the local community including a blood drive, furniture donations, education of inner-city youths and visits to local soup kitchen.

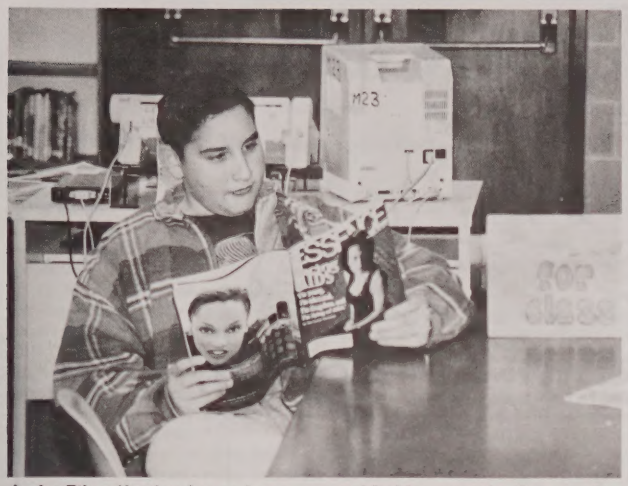


Myell J. Figueroa-Diggs's painting is featured above.

Food Classes Host Holiday Tea

On December 21, 1994, Lexington High School retirees and current staff members were treated to a Holiday Tea hosted by the Family and Consumer Science Department (formerly Home Economics) under the guidance of Ms. Patricia Adair, Ms. Phyllis Cook and Ms. Marilyn Craig. Students from the various cooking classes prepared all the food. Throughout the preparation process students had the opportunity to apply many of their art, business, math, science, and social studies skills. All leftovers were packaged and delivered to homeless people at the Bristol Lodge, a soup kitchen in Waltham.

Compiled by Offer Egozy



Junior Ethan Handwerker probes a womans' fashion magazine for some beauty tips.

Photo by Josh Vacanti

Return of Band Night Rouses LHS Audience

by
Chris Amar

On Thursday, November 8, over 100 people crowded into the Auditorium to see nine different musical acts in the first Band Night in two years.

The evening, sponsored by the Sophomore Class Council, began with MC's Bobby MacLean and Carly Gillis introducing Santa Claus (played by Jed Berger), who reappeared throughout the night. Then, performances began with the Dance Troupe which danced to one song and brought members of the crowd to their feet.

Following Dance Troupe was senior Mali Sastri, who played and sang three original compositions, most memorably was a beautiful "Indestructible."

After getting into his groove, sophomore Nader Hassan, the next performer, sang an original composition and closed with a blues duet with Mike Welch, singing, "That's All Right."

The mood then switched from energetic to slow and calm with three well-played solid piano pieces by Sophomore Greg Perpignan, but livened-up again when the Dance Troupe came on with an encore performance.

After an intermission, the rock bands came on. First, Incantation, made up of Alexander Hart-Malloy, Jason Hester, Andrew Benedick, David and Robert Hutchinson, and Seth Sharkey rocked the house with a five-song set, including a remake of "Free Bird." Then, the Artist Formerly Known as Prince, composed of Dan McFadden, Steve Hart, Chris Manshreck and Nader Hassan played a decent four-song set.

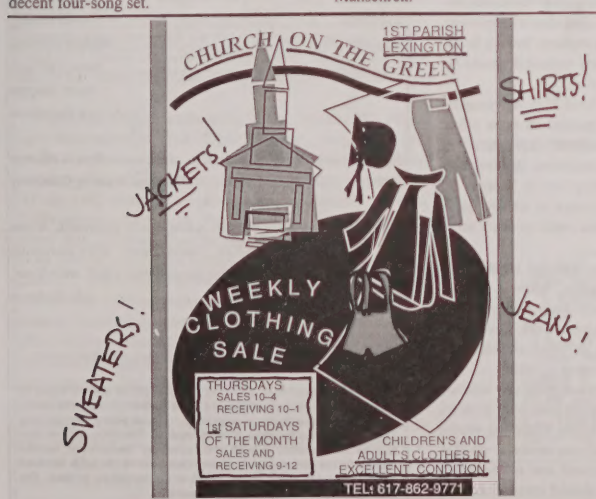
Sophomores Alyssa Roeder and Greg Costello changed the pace with acoustic performances of "Hammer and Nail" and "Romeo and Juliet," both sing beautifully by Roeder.

> "My friends and I enjoyed the show immensely, especially, the display put on by Chris Manschrek."
>
> *-Junior Erika Dahlin-Lee*

Then came a highlight of the night: the band Strawberry Nut Road, including Brad Upton, Ranjan Roy, Chris Manshreck, Max Gassmann, and Adam Mitropolos. Following an energetic introduction, the band began an original composition. However, due to several instances of profanity in the songs lyrics their set came to a quick halt. Assistant Principal Art Dulong jumped on stage and ended their song. "I'll never swear again," Manschrek noted after the show.

Finally, the Jasper Hayes Klein Band, made up of sophomores (Greg Costello, Alec Serian, Peter Groblewski, Jon Abraham, Andrew Dubeau, and Mike Welch) ended the night on a height note, playing six songs, most notably, "The Thrill is Gone."

Junior Erika Dahlin-Lee noted that Band Night was a remarkable success. "My friends and I enjoyed the show immensely. Especially, the display put on by Chris Manschrek."



SASS Stimulates Diverse Population

by
Amy Lowenthal

SASS, Students Against Sexual Stereotypes, is a ground breaking student group. It was the first group at LHS to receive a state grant, which was awarded to them last May by the Governor's Commission on Gay and Lesbian Youth. It is also the first group in Massachusetts to have a resource center, which is located in E-House. But what exactly is SASS? It is a group all about, "how people are the same and how people are different," explains president and founder Alyssa Rayman-Read.

SASS was founded last year by Rayman-Read and recent graduate Priscilla Merriam. They wanted to target a broad range of students in their group which met every three weeks. Although 210 students signed up at the activities fair, they soon had a committed membership of 10 students and 15 faculty members. Their meetings involved training students to be diplomatic with each other's opinions through talking about homophobia and related issues. When SASS received the $2,000 in grant money in May, it decided to use the money to furnish a resource center in E-house. The group bought books, videotapes, and pamphlets that are available to any student interested in browsing. This resource center was important because it meant that SASS was starting to be firmly grounded in LHS.

Additionally, Rayman-Read became a panelist on the Commission for Gay and Lesbian Youth and gave speeches at other schools about starting similar groups. She believes SASS is about, "how to organize reforming the school to make changes." Rayman-Read emphasized that SASS is not a gay/straight alliance but an "awareness group."

This year, SASS is more organized than ever. Along with advisor Patricia Maier and co-vice-presidents John Ramsey and Kate Martin, Rayman-Read is full of goals and ideas for this year. First, the executive board would like to publicize the resource center, possibly through the guidance office. Second, the group would like to receive another grant that would help further supply the resource center. Third, the group would like to help organize other area high schools, specifically Brookline and Newton South. This will be accomplished by activities that are both educational and social. Some ideas for this are three town parties open to all students, educational workshops with speakers and movies, and parent/student talk nights in Lexington.

> "Every school in Massachusetts should have a safe atmosphere for students regardless of whether homophobia is okay"
>
> *-SASS President Alyssa Rayman-Read*

In SASS meetings, leaders train students through group activities to become, "physically and mentally comfortable with each other," states Rayman-Read.

SASS never censors anyone's opinion. Parents and faculty members who haven't endorsed SASS have been invited to come and sit in on meetings, though many have decline. The members of SASS believe that the way to gather support is by showing that there is always common ground between people. Everyone believes that, "every school in Massachusetts should have a safe atmosphere for students regardless of whether homophobia is okay," states Rayman-Read.

Why is SASS so successful? Probably because the leadership is so dedicated to increasing publicity and targeting everyone as well as the ideals of SASS. "We're so organized we're almost anal," laughed Rayman-Read.

Annual Debate Tourney Attracts Hundreds

by
Nick Rose

Once again, more than 300 students from around the country invaded Lexington High School on the weekend of January 13-15. Why? Lexington's annual Winter Debate Tournament which is quickly becoming a national event. Schools came from as far west as Utah and California to compete in the tournament which occurs every Martin Luther King weekend. The tournament went from Friday through Sunday, with a champion being crowned in the varsity division on Sunday afternoon.

Schools from Lakeland, New York, Newark Science, New Jersey, Head Royce, California, and Newburgh, New York, reached the quarterfinal round of the tournament before being quickly dispatched. In a hotly contested semifinal match between schools from Edison, Virginia and the Georgetown Day School from Washington, the team from Edison managed to advance to the final round. There they faced a team from Pace High School in Atlanta which had defeated a solid team from Jefferson High School in Virginia in the other semifinal. The championship round was the best, though, combining in Edison and Pace two of the better teams and programs in the country. As senior co-captain Steve Lehotsky said: "Pace and Edison were clearly the two best teams in the tournament, making it a very competitive and interesting final round." Edison ended up winning narrowly on a 2-1 decision, thus taking home the 1995 Lexington Championship trophy.

The top speaker in the varsity division was a bit of surprise with Maggie Antil, a debater from Hampshire Regional High School in Massachusetts winning the award. The surprise wasn't that Maggie won the award but in the program she came from. Hampshire Regional has always been a smaller debate school with a smaller budget and therefore a smaller chance to compete nationally. As LHS debate coach Les Phillips said, "This just proves that a small school with a small budget and small opportunities can, with hard work, compete on a national level and be very successful."

Besides being a competitive tournament, the Lexington tournament also serves as a meeting place for friends from all over the country. Rarely do people get a chance to all get together at one place. As junior Mike Horowitz said, "It was a good opportunity to see all the friends I had made. Everybody was together in one place."

Although the competition may not have been as intense as at the NFL football playoff games which were happening simultaneously, the Lexington Tournament continued its tradition as a great tournament, with top-notch debating, and supreme organization.

Cooperation Needed to Stop Senior Slump

As first semester comes to a close, a period which teachers abhor yet students relish is about to begin: senior slump. Having finished with the college applications process, many students will begin to slacken their efforts and dwindle into academic mediocrity.

Senior slump is not necessarily bad however. After three and a half years of intense and stressful work, most seniors deserve a period to relax. However, freedom from the stressful implications of work and grades should not imply freedom from doing any work at all. Many senior teachers object when students do not work diligently or "blow off their class." These teachers are essentially right, yet in blaming the students, these teachers fail to examine their own teaching.

Teachers realistically have little in the arsenal with which to intimidate seniors into working hard during second semester. Attempts to do so are usually unproductive. Increasing a student's workload and the penalties associated with missed work just serves to create a hostile relationship between the slumping students and the frustrated teacher. This type of confrontational environment is not conducive to learning.

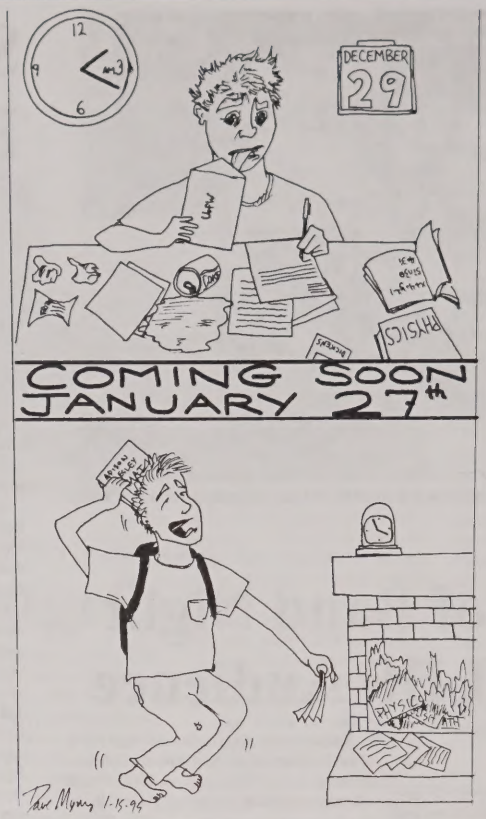
When presented with hostility, slumping seniors seem to shrink further into a shell of apathy. However, when presented with a teacher who genuinely cares about his or her students, these same slumping seniors may begin to respond. "I would never slump in his class," a senior recently said of Dr. Michael Fiveash's Latin IV class. The reason is based on the atmosphere of mutual respect present in Fiveash's class the senior explained. "I wouldn't want to let him down," the senior concluded.

Of course, the bulk of the blame for senior slump still rests squarely on the shoulders of the students. However, throughout the years, many seniors have proven totally unresponsive to attempts to change their behavior through intimidation pleading, or berating. The conclusion is obvious: seniors will continue to slump, even though they are in the wrong to do so.

In addition to avoiding attempts at alleviating senior slump through punishment, teachers could make their classes more interactive in order to make students more interested. The second semester senior brain, already beating to a pulp by college applications and prone to be thinking about next weekend, is unlikely to respond well to constant lecturing. However, this lifeless piece of organic material could well be sparked to life by debate or discussion of interesting material.

Previous attempts to break the cycle of academic lifelessness have proven unsuccessful, fruitless, and silly. It is time to try something different.

Such unsigned express the general opinions of the Musket editorial board.



Classes Should Be Leveled Properly to Ensure Fairness

Although most students primary criteria for class selection is usually whether the class's topic is enjoyable and a source of curiosity or necessity to that student, another important factor is the amount of work that student will have to do to succeed in the class. Students whose out-of-school hours are consumed by extra-curricular activities may wish to carry an easier course load in school. The system the high school has designed to accommodate this type of selection, while also aggregating students of similar abilities and potentials into similar classes, is the leveling system.

Honors courses are defined by Lexington High School as those classes which "are most advanced and require superior scholarship for success." Honors teachers often assume that since they are teaching an "honors" class, the students somehow already have an understanding of a course which they have not yet taken. Basic information is skipped over while more advanced concepts are taught. This style of teaching results in students knowing how to do abstract problems and constructions but not having any idea how the knowledge applies to anything. Time and knowledge are wasted when learning has no foundation to build on.

Level one courses "require demonstrated sound scholarship and study skills for success." The truth of the matter is that level one classes often require "superior" scholarship while many honors classes merely need "sound" scholarship and study skills. Level one classes don't skip over basic materials as honors classes do, but they also don't skip over advanced information. This results in students having to do twice as much work in a class that they expected would be shade easier.

Then there is the 'honors' A = 5.0, 'level 1' A=4.5 weighting system. That .5 is supposed to represent an extra effort on the students' part, striving for academic excellence. A student who is highly motivated and ambitious in level one gets the same amount of credit as a lazy boy in honors. If effort is supposed to be rewarded, justice is hardly done when the label "honors" adds graduation credit to one's transcript.

Latin is an example of a level one class that is probably more challenging than other honors classes. Latin is offered only at the level one level. Students who learn a comparable amount of language, while doing more homework, deserve to be awarded the same credit. Latin is no less valuable than French or Spanish and should not be treated as such.

The leveling of classes is a necessary action in any institution of learning. Students that excel in one area may wish to stretch themselves by taking "honors" while becoming proficient in, but not experts at their level one courses. In the interest of students' time and commitment and in teachers' expectation and satisfaction, students should receive from a course what they expect from it. Level of the same subject must be periodically compared to assure that there truly is a "level" of difference.

-Kit Connolly

REACT!

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Letters to the Editor

"Uniform Grades" Editorial Draws Fire From Faculty

Dear Editor,

The Musket's very disappointing December 5, editorial ("No Uniform Grades Hurt All Students") demands several responses.

1) The editorial's premise -- that there is wide variation in grading between teachers within the same course -- is not proven. It seems to be based on entirely anecdotal information ("Anyone who has spent time as an LHS student knows . . ."). Data to support (or contradict) the premise are readily available from the different departments or from the registrar, and the editors should have gone out and obtained it before they wrote their editorial.

2) The editors, who are quite harsh in their criticism of teachers who "stubbornly refuse to comply with more uniform grading standards" (which, according to the editorial, don't exist (!?)) clearly have no idea how "more uniform" grading is to be achieved. They want "basic guidelines," but not "strict quotas," and that's as far as they go. What methods, please, do the editors have for reforming the intrinsic subjectivity of grading? Teachers are not machines. Quite reasonably they have different emphases, different values, different methods of using grades to motivate, enlighten, or alarm students. Much of what is being measured, the quality of writing or the quality of insight, to give two examples, is intrinsically subjective. Certainly most teachers try to be fair, and most departments have had discussion concerning fairness and uniformity. (Did the editors talk to any departments heads before they sat down to the keyboard?) For the Musket to complain that teachers "stubbornly refuse" to respond to these issues, especially when the Musket has no constructive response of its own, borders on irresponsibility.

3) Why is uniformity so desirable? Perhaps to prepare students for college or graduate school, where all teachers grade uniformly? Or for the world of work, where all effort is evaluated and rewarded using precise mathematical scales? If anything, high school is fairer and more "uniform" than what's about to follow. More likely, the editors proceed from the premise that the chief purpose of high school is to sort people out into Barron's categories. Grades have many functions other than that. Teachers have many functions other than that.

Ultimately, I think the editors, like most other Lexington students, are far too concerned with marginal differences in GPA and how they affect the meaning of life. Everyone in this community needs a firmer understanding of an important fact: being compelled to attend, say, Hamilton rather than Cornell should not represent irreparable psychic trauma. In ten years, what you are able to do and what kind of person you are will be vastly more important than where you went to school -- and although that may sound like the sort of consolation handed you by parents or friends after you get a rejection letter, it also happens to be true.

-Leslie Phillips
Debate Teacher

Dear Editor,

Often, day-to-day life in general, perhaps especially in schools, becomes so frenetic that we forget to take a long look at what we are doing. Hence, the Musket editorial of December 5, 1994, calling for an examination of uniformity of grades, has done us all a favor. Discrepancies in grades from one section to another of the same course certainly deserve investigation. Such differences may in fact represent composition of the class, or they may involve many other variables. The editors seem to acknowledge some of these elements when they call for the formulation by each department of a "more uniform grading policy," adding that there should be "basic guidelines for how difficult courses would be."

A problem with this reasoning is that, because the editors base their editorial on a single example, study of present grade distributions may reflect that there is much less discrepancy than a single example from two years ago implies. Of course, even a single exception merits review. Unfortunately, the editors' thinking take a curious next step when they comment that because "some classes will have more overall ability that others," the results will be "better grades"! Their assumption seems to be that grades are a reward for *ability*, rather than for work done, material learned, knowledge gained. When they say that "students ar effectively punished for taking courses with harder teachers," they clearly suggest that learning plays not much part in their real concerns, but only college transcripts. Probably more important, however, it is quite possible for there to be no discrepancy in grades among various sections, yet for significant unfairness to exist in what students are expected to know. These are far more difficult questions to ask and to solve. They also involve much more directly what schools should be about, not merely grades.

-Patricia M. Maier
English Teacher

Student Upset With Life Skills Program

There are many things I would like to change about the Life Skills program at the High School. Until recently, I didn't know how best to go about doing it. I firmly believe that the current Life Skills class is a complete waste of time. This belief led to my first meeting with the Health Education Department Head, Mrs. Wolfrum, who was hired by the town of Lexington to design curriculum for a new health education class. Because Mrs. Wolfrum has never attended a Life Skills class, she would like to have student input concerning changes that need to be made. I found her eager to listen to my complaints and opinions.

The first issue I would like to voice is that there is currently no written curriculum for the class. This means that aside from a few basic points, the Life Skills teachers can decide what they do in their classes. The current class was designed by its teachers, which shows us why they have been so protective of it. For this reason, Life Skills teacher's interests are more vested in forcing students to participate than in changing the class into something students would actually take an interest in.

Some excellent examples of forced participation in Junior year Life Skills are the mandatory editorial, and the new grading policy. The required editorial is simply a large assignment designed to force the students to spend time working on Life Skills. Teacher of the course could argue that writing an editorial is in itself a life skill. I agree that this is a necessary talent. However, it is by no means as important as other skills we could learn in class. The abilities to find a job, fill out a college application, decide future plans, balance a checkbook, and file taxes are far more important than writing an editorial. Virtually everyone will need these skills at some point in their lives, whereas few will need to write editorials. If the Life Skills teachers truly had the best interest of the students in mind, they would have chosen something more practical than an editorial as a required assignment.

The new grading policy is also an attempt to scare student into participating. Until recently, students would receive either a passing or failing grade. Currently, students receive either a F, P-, P, or P+ mark. Once again instead of making class enjoyable and interesting for students, the teachers have chosen punish students who are not committed to class.

If you have any feedback you would like to share with a faculty member, Mrs. Wolfrum is located at the Department Head's offices in G house.

-David Eisner
Class of 1996

Musket's Gender Bias Questioned

Dear Editor,

I noticed, as I read the Musket, that there were 17 pictures/photographs. Of these, 14 were essentially of high school boys, mostly boys doing something such as playing hockey, football or being interviewed. Cheerleaders were mentioned in the Bob Lobel article, but none were seen.

It fills me with sadness to see this kind of favoritism in the Musket. Perhaps you could rectify it by having an issue devoted to Lexington High School girls.

-Lorraine Ward, Bridge School
Chair, Elementary Gender Equity Committee

Open Campus Bills Requires Revamping

On January 11, the Senate quietly dismissed the Sophomore Open Campus Bill by a 16-12 vote. The bill would have given open campus privileges to sophomores with grade point averages above 3.0 coupled with parental consent.

Although most upperclassmen may enjoy denying sophomores open campus because today's seniors and juniors didn't have that privilege when they were sophomores, this rationale is not very constructive. The true problem with the bill is the fundamental intention underlying it. Senator Lily Filip accurately characterized the bill as "self-serving" legislation.

The sophomores, through passage of this bill, would be allowed to get open campus privileges beginning the week following February vacation. Past and present Senate legislation has never benefited from this type of immediate implementation. The Community Service Bill, for example, only will effect incoming freshman.

Other often heard arguments against the bill, for example that it will lead to overcrowding of the student library due to an influx of sophomores and that with class come privileges, do not appear to be relevant.

There seems to be plenty of working space in cafeterias and the professional library. As, for the latter argument, privileges stem from responsibility and maturity, not grade level. The notion that sophomores, due to their grade level alone, are not mature enough to have open campus discounts the inherent diversity and heterogeneity in all classes.

The bill should be amended so that it would go into effect starting with the incoming freshman class, with the same GPA and parental consent requirements. The amendment would also give the administration ample time to prepare for the changes.

The vote on the bill in the Senate was unusual, but predictable. The freshman and sophomore senators almost unanimously voted for the bill while the junior and senior senators, in general voted against it.

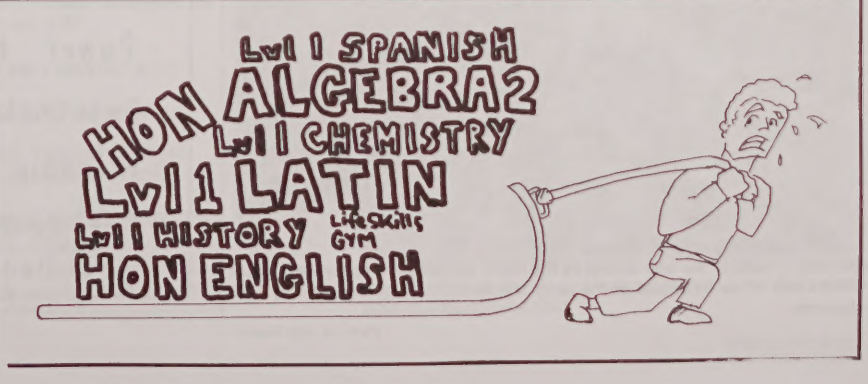
There were, of course, some who went against the flow of their grade and disrupted the pattern, but the vote seemed to imply a sectional class problem. There was also a loss of objectivity because some of the senators were directly and specifically involved with the issue. Although I voted with the majority on the bill, my rationale for its rejection is in the minority.

There is nothing inherently wrong with the bill. The problem is its unfair starting point. The bill should be amended so that it would go into effect starting with the incoming freshman class, with the same GPA and parental consent requirements.

The amendment would also give the administration ample time to prepare for the changes.

In this way, if the bill passed, it would not be because freshmen and sophomores were looking toward their own personal futures, but it would pass because, along with their upper-class counterparts, they would be looking toward the role of sophomores in the future and the freedom that these sophomores should have at LHS.

-Chris Amar



Debate Triumphs at Tournaments

by
Andrew Sung

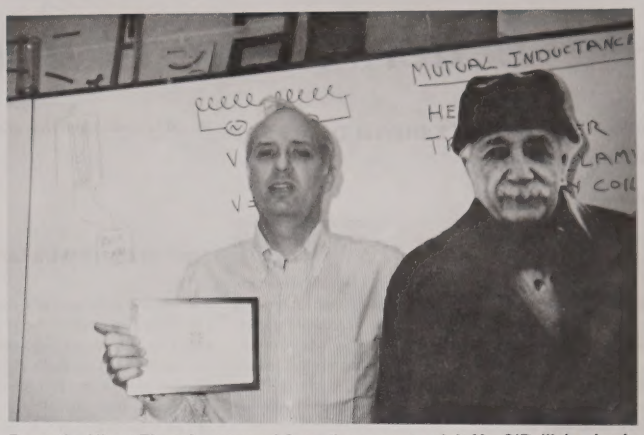
The debate team has been successful in the past few months and has truly shown how much depth it has this year. Senior duo Steve Lehotsky and Matt Nichols continued their national onslaught after winning the Southern Bell Forum Tournament at the Montgomery Bell Academy in Nashville, Tennessee. The two were undefeated in the preliminary rounds, and they picked up every judge in the elimination rounds. Lehotsky and Nichols are the first team from Lexington ever to win the MBA tournament, although Lehotsky and his partner came close last year by losing in the finals.

On January 6-7th, Lexington seniors Offer Egozy and Andrew Sung wrapped up another successful outing by placing first at the Westchester Classic Tournament in New York. Like Lehotsky and Nichols, Egozy and Sung did not lose a single ballot, and were the top seed going into the elimination rounds.

At the same tournament, Senior Armen Zohrabian and Junior Kiran Raj picked up second place at the tournament, beating a tough Bronx Science team in the semifinals. Junior duo Alex Roetter and Nick Rose also reached the semifinal round and were close over by Sung and Egozy. Seniors Peter Ouyang, Chris Unkel, Grace Shieh, and juniors Mike Horowitz, Adam Bund and Jacob Krich all reached elimination rounds. Lexington also took home several speaker awards.

With the recent victories, Lexington has qualified seven varsity policy teams to attend the Tournament of Champions in Kentucky this April. Already setting the record for teams brought to the TOC, Lexington could potentially send a few more teams.

"Clearly we have the deepest team ever to compete in high school debate. Sending seven teams to the Tournament of Champions is unprecedented. The fact that we could potentially have all these teams clear at the tournament is truly frightening," stated a jubilant Steven Lehotsky.



Recently Albert Einstein returned from the grave to visit Mr. O'Reilly's physics class.

Photo from Musket *File*

Survey Will Try to Assess Racial Climate

by
Mike Horowitz and Nick Rose

In response to the racial tension which engulfed Lexington High in September, the disciplinary committee established at the end of October has been given the task of finding out whether there are any racial biases in the way teachers and administrators give out punishments.

The committee recently circulated a one page questionnaire for all 11th and 12th graders to fill out. During the first week in December teachers will also receive the questionnaire. Each questionnaire will be read by at least two of the committee members. After all the questionnaires are read, the committee will publish a composite answer, based on the responses received. The reading of questionnaires has already begun, and the committee hopes to have all the student responses read by the time they distribute the questionnaire to the faculty.

The committee is a fact finding committee, not an action committee. After all of the results are tabulated, a report will be given to Mr. Wilson and Mr. Young, and they will report the results to the school committee. The results of the survey along with the composite essay will be available in January of 1995. The school committee will then use the results as the basis for any needed disciplinary changes in the Lexington High School system. The purpose of the committee is to gather data on the discipline system and present it to everyone.

"Hopefully we'll make some progress," says Mrs. McGuire, school nurse and co-chairperson of the committee. She says that the purpose of the committee is not to point fingers at people, but rather to raise the consciousness of the students and faculty.

Mrs. Miliken, director of the student writing lab, and a member of the committee said that "I don't know that there will be any change. Depending on what we see. Recommendations will be made." She and Mrs. McGuire both feel that it is too early to tell whether the school policy will be changed, but both think that the results will help the committee and Mr. Wilson solve any problems that do exist in the discipline system.

The independent mediators who monitored Lexington High School following the racial incidents in September suggested the disciplinary committee as a way to find out whether there is a perception that punishment at Lexington High is given out unfairly. The questions, which include yes or no questions as well as essays, were chosen by the committee, which expects a variety of answers.

Students Take Charge of Condom Program

by
Emily Blumsack

The Condom Availability and Education Program, originally a Senate sponsored program, is beginning its third year of making condom packets available to those students who choose to engage in sexual activities. Inside each of the white envelopes found in the Guidance offices at E house, H house and the Nurse's office can be found a school related fact sheet including RePlace information and suggestions about contacting guidance counselors. There is also a brochure dealing with the effectiveness of condoms to prevent STD's and unwanted pregnancies, and a memo from the school committee explaining that the program does not promote sexual behavior but rather that it is a response to a threat against students health.

On December 22, 1993, the Lexington High School Student/Faculty Senate passed a bill "which would create a committee to oversee the condom availability program at the high school." The bill took responsibility for the program away from LHS Social Worker Martha Queenin, who headed the program prior to Senate intervention.

At the end of the 93-94 school year, the committee became independent of the Senate. At present, the program is run by students and is led by seniors Jonas Woolverton and Sam Handlin.

According to Handlin, the group meets once a week for 40 minutes to make the approximately 100 packets needed to replenish the baskets around school. They also take the responsibility of keeping track of statistics such as how many packets are taken from what location, which then is recorded onto a data base weekly.

When asked about the effectiveness of the program, Woolverton stated that it is worthwhile. "Packets are being taken at an alarming rate, so someone thinks they are useful." Woolverton thinks that "the most important aspect of the program is that we have information regarding abstinence and the seriousness of sexual actions. That way people *have* to see it." He feels that the threat to the health of sexually active people is such that, "something must be done no matter how uncomfortable it makes people." Both Woolverton and Handlin want to see the program kept "simple, efficient, and effective."

Lois Coit, chairperson of the School Committee, stated that the School Committee, "has not had complaints about the condom availability program and although a small group of people are unhappy with it, the community on the whole seems satisfied."

Recently, a Holiday Tea was hosted by the Home Economics Department. It featured some prime examples of the tasty architecture being designed by LHS students.

Photo by Josh Vacanti

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Boys' B-ball Starts Strong

by
J.R. Rudman

There has been a plethora of exciting Minuteman Basketball action to indulge in. There have been games in which there were outstanding individual performances, marathon games which had fans biting their nails, and even games which had some rim rattling slams. Through all of the above , the team hung tough, and pulled off a 7-4 record.

On January 20, things took a turn for the worse as Lexington got pummeled by Wakefield 63-49, who avenged their earlier loss to the Minutemen.

It was during their first battle with Wakefield that the Minutemen looked especially sharp. On December 12 in the hallowed halls of the Ralph Lord gymnasium Lexington led 54-45 with seven minutes remaining in the contest. However, the game took a sudden twist and quickly turned into a memorable affair creating reputations for some, and panic for others.

Wakefield's increased defensive pressure, led to Minutemen turnovers and repeated scores by the Warriors. Suddenly, they had tied the game at 59.

The game went into a four minute overtime period. Early in the extra period all-star Brek Kohler, who had scored 27 points, fouled out of the game. However, this hole was quickly filled by the collective efforts of senior center Murad "Mo" Wornum and junior forward Jamal Holley. Wornum picked up 13 rebounds and 11 points while Holley, in only his third varsity start, poured in 30 points.

As overtime went along it became apparent that the final shot would determine the winner. With 10 seconds left Wakefield tied the score at 66. In the second overtime the Minutemen held the Warriors to just two points while scoring seven of their own.

"Nobody wants to win more than we do...Overtime is gut check time and our kids busted a gut."

-Head Coach Bob Farias

The game ended with a Lexington victory, 73-68, and a well deserved standing ovation from an enthralled hometown crowd. "The fans were a sixth man...They certainly got their three dollars worth," stated elated Head Coach Bob Farias.

As the team prepared for the second half of the year, it must rely on the players that Farias has labeled the "Big Three": Holley (16.5 ppg), Kohler (19.1 ppg) and Wornum (17.6 ppg and 11 rebounds per game).

Meg Catteral and Jackie Yerardi return from basketball practice.

Photo by April Bovet

Girls' Track team members have warmed up to a fantastic start.

Photo by April Bovet

Girls' Tracksters Off to Promising Start

by
Shira Miller-Jacobs

The girls indoor track team is off to a great start this year. Although there have been a few disappointments, the team has really worked hard to do its best. The team is now 2-2 with another expected win coming up.

On December 31, the team raced against Reading, one of the best teams in the league and although they competed hard, they lost 41-45. In the two mile Kristen Johansson took first with a time of 12:46.7 while Reading took both second and third.

In the high jump Vera Veldkamp and Suzanne Rommelfanger jumped 5 ft and 4'10" respectively, taking second and third. in the shot put, Flavia Gnecco threw 28'2" a throw which earned her a second place finish.

Amy Porter ran 3"01.8 in the 1000 claiming another second place for Lexington. in the 600, Gayle Holt and Caroline Kasparian took first and second with 1:36.8 and 1:37.4 respectively. Lexington scored three points in the 300 thanks to Anna Riera (43.6).

The most exciting race of the day came in the mile. Lexington was down by 6 with the score at 24-30. A first and second place was needed. Ellen Humphrey settled herself in first place about half way through the race and remained there to the finish in 5:48.3.

Lili Anderson started in sixth place and was slowly working her way up. With one lap remaining the Reading girl was still ahead of Anderson, but Anderson out ran her by less than a second. Anderson clocked in at 5:54.7 and the Reading runner, 5:54.8. This put Lexington ahead 32-31.

In the hurdles Michele Guinane and Kim Barnes took second and third (9.5 and 9.7) to bring the score to 36-36. Lexington took first place in the dash thanks to Shani Graham (7.9), but it was not enough to bring us a win before the relay. With the meet hanging in the balance, the team entered the relay.

Although the Lexington team, which is comprised of Guinane (subbing in for Julie Howell who was out sick), Humphrey, Kasparian, and Holt, ran well (4:33.6), it was not enough to beat the Reading team (4:25.6). "The team ran really well. We showed them that we are a good team by coming very close to beating them," said Riera after the meet. Coach Crosby wishes that the teams could run the meet over in a couple weeks.

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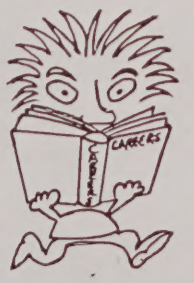

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Senior Jamie McDonald has helped lead the boys' basketball team to a successful start

Photo by April Bovet

Phil Murphy attempts to catch up to his fellow Lexingtonian in a recent practice session.

Photo by April Bovet

Boys' Track Looking to Season's 2nd Half

by
Phil Oliff

The boys' indoor track team has had a difficult time thus far this season. After four meets the team's record was 1-3. The teams' early season troubles came as somewhat of a shock to a squad that has compiled a record of 17-1 over the past two seasons to go along with a Middlesex League Championship as well as a Massachusetts State Title. Yet, the losing record was not entirely disappointing.

The team realized that a great deal of talent was lost to graduation and that in order to regain past dominance, it would have to rebuild. The teams that the squad lost to, Woburn, Wakefield, and Reading, all are among the three best teams in the Middlesex League.

On January 7, when Watertown appeared on the schedule, it was seen as a chance for Lexington to regain some lost confidence against the statistically inferior Watertown team. However, the day of the meet coincided with a separate freshman-sophomore meet as well as the Junior ski trip weekend. Thus, the team entered without most of its freshmen and sophomores and many of its juniors. Coaches Bud Reed and Ken Totas feared an embarrassing loss, but these fears were put to rest as Lexington pummeled Watertown 68-18.

In the two mile race sophomore Aron Adler and Dave Myung crossed the finish line together to finish first and second, respectively.

"Lexington has a chance to be a factor in the Middlesex league this year, but to do so we must develop and focus on our ultimate goal."

-Senior Aron Shapiro

In the high jump, Senior Marc Reynolds grabbed first place and fellow w Senior Aron Shapiro snagged third.

Shot putter David Lee added five more points with a first place in the shot put while Chi-Chen Wen contributed a third place effort.

Senior Josh Curtis ran first in the 100 yard run and Junior Phil Oliff took second.

In the 600, Bryant Lee ran a phenomenal race taking first place with a personal best of 1:21.0. David Kern battled to a third place finish.

Todd Rosenfield and Mike Broderick added to the onslaught by taking first and second in the 300 yard race.

In the mile, Lexington swept all three places with John Paul Mahoney, Yun Yung, and Mike Hemond doing the damage.

In the 45 yard dash, Aron Shapiro sprinted to a second place finish while Phil David, running for the first time this year, took third.

The relay team of Phil Green, Mark Reynolds, Todd Rosenfield, and Bryant Lee faced no competition as Watertown did not field a relay team of its own.

After easily disposing of Watertown things look to brighter for the Minutemen. The second half of the season should not be nearly as challenging as the first because Lexington has already face the most challenging teams.

The team hopes to have the fortitude and the will to begin winning close meets and to apply the talent that has been showing throughout the early going.

Senior trackster Aron Shapiro looks at the second half of the season with an optimistic glint. "Lexington has a chance to be a factor in the Middlesex league this year, but to do so we must develop and focus on our ultimate goal."

The girls' basketball team peaked at #7 in the Boston *Globe* coaches' poll.

Photo from Musket *File*

Minutemaids Extirpate the Competition

by
Stefanie Berman

Although they've recently faltered, this year's varsity girls' basketball at LHS has started their new season with a record of 9-2 in the Middlesex League. The team's success even placed it at #7 in the state in the Boston *Globe*'s Coaches Poll for a week, before recent losses to Burlington and Wakefield bounced it from the prestigious list.

On January 20, the Minutemaids faced rival Wakefield. Unfortunately, "We went cold for eight minutes," explained senior Katharine Westfall. "The ball just didn't fall for us. We worked hard, but nothing went our way." The final score, Wakefield 63, Lexington 41, confirmed her statements.

The team, consisting only of five seasoned veterans, opened the season on a much brighter note, with a resounding 38-20 victory against Woburn in the Ralph Lord Gymnasium at LHS on Tuesday, December 13.

Senior center Julie Bonner leads the attack and is second in the Middlesex League in scoring, boasting an average of 12 points per game.

Other starters senior small forward Jessica Hurt, freshman forward Andrea Pawlicek, and guards Westfall and sophomore Jackie Yerardi have fought hard to dominate both the offensive and defensive ends of the floor.

Using an aggressive zone defense, forcing numerous turnovers, and controlling the boards the LHS team is ready to take on the remaining two league opponents before running through the schedule again.

"We have proved that we can still play and that this year has potential to be another successful one."

-Senior guard Jessica Hurt

"We have to play a different style game than we did last year," commented Lasa on the strategy. "Rather than going inside all of the time we are going to have to rely a lot more on the fast break and pressing the ball."

"We are all really proud that we've been winning," stated Hurt. "We have proved that we can still play and that this year has potential to be another successful one."

LHS boys swimmers have started the season of undefeated.

Photo from Musket *File*

Swimmers Stay Undefeated

by
Chris Amar

The LHS boys' swim team continued its winning streak with two impressive victories over Melrose and Natick.

On December 22, host Lexington defeated Melrose by a score of 93-76 in what was seen as one of the most important meets of the year. "They had beaten us for the past two years, so it was very satisfying to finally beat them," noted Senior co-captain Chris Randall.

Melrose, last year's champion, fell behind from the start as Lexington won the 200 yard medley relay in which Bobby MacLean came from behind to barely edge out the Melrose relay. Randall followed with a first place in the 200 yard freestyle in 1:56.09, giving Lexington an early 19-11 lead.

Lexington then expanded its lead with the help of seniors Noah Herman and co-captain Andy Fortmann, who finished first and third, respectively, in the 50 yard and 100 yard freestyle events.

Following a first place in the 500 yard freestyle by Randall, in 5:29.56, and a third place in the 200 yard freestyle relay by Jesse Herman, Josh Caras, Bobby MacLean, and Eugene Valsky, sophomore Jake Kissel blazed ahead of the pack to win the 100 yard backstroke in 1:07.s8.

Finally, in the last event of the meet, the 400 yard freestyle relay, Lexington (3:46.97) easily outdistanced Melrose (3:51.22) while Valsky, junior Peter Cole, and Sophomores Ben Carey and Steve Davis came in fourth. "Our guys really pulled through and tried their hardest. I just hope we can keep it up for the rest of the season," noted Fortmann.

Directly following the winter break, Lexington faced Natick in the second non-league meet of the year. After the first event, the 200 yard medley relay, in which Lexington placed second and third, the Minutemen took the lead and never gave it up, winning 108-70. Lexington placed first in nine of the eleven events, sweeping the 500 yard freestyle and the 200 yard freestyle relay.